

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the instant application is respectfully requested. The present amendment is responsive to the Final Office Action of October 7, 2003, and submitted concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE), in which claims 1, 3-6, 8-12, 14-17, 19-22 and 24-26 are presently pending. Of those, claims 1, 5-6, 10, 11, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,441,615 to Fujita, et al. In addition, claims 3, 4, 8, 9, 14, 15, 19, 20, 24 and 25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujita, in view of U.S. Patent 6,448,774 to Heid. Finally, claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujita, in view of U.S. Patent 6,559,642 to King. For the following reasons, however, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance.

In a telephone interview between the Examiner and the undersigned on December 5, 2003, the terminology "underlapping", as previously used in the pending claims, was discussed. As a result of the telephone interview, independent claims 1, 6, 11, 17 and 22 have been amended to recite that "...each of said superior coil elements are arranged with an associated one of said inferior coil elements in an overlapping configuration, and each of said left portions are arranged with an associated one of said right portions in a *non-overlapping* configuration..." (Emphasis added)

Accordingly, the 8-channel coil of the present disclosure (as is now more specifically pointed out in the claims) provides that the superior/inferior coils are arranged in an overlapping configuration while, at the same time, the left/right portions are arranged in a non-overlapping (i.e., spaced apart) configuration, as is shown in Figures 2 and 4. This specific coil design is particularly suited for SENSE imaging.


In contrast, a review of the Fujita reference reveals that there is no teaching or suggestion of a non-overlapping as between left/right portions, with an overlapping of superior/inferior coils. As can be seen most particularly in Figure 4 of Fujita, the ladder coils 100₁ through 100₈ are all overlapping with respect to one another in a left/right orientation. In other words, there is no teaching of non-overlapping of left/right coil portions. Accordingly, since this claim element is not found in Fujita or any of the other references of record, the obviousness rejections to each of the remaining pending claims have been overcome, and it is respectfully requested that the same be withdrawn.

Finally, as was also discussed during the above referenced teleconference, the §112, second paragraph rejections to each of the pending claims has been overcome. More specifically, in view of the language of claims as presently worded, the Examiner has concurred that the claims do provide antecedent basis for the terms "said inferior" and "said superior coil" in the independent claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the §112 rejections in this regard be withdrawn.

For the above stated reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. No new matter has been entered and no additional fees are believed to be required. However, if any fees are due with respect to this Amendment, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicants' attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,
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